

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

CU-02 /063 W

-----211458Z 127582 /53

R 211205Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 732

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 1015

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IN

SUBJECT: SIGNS OF BENGALI HOSTILITY TO SANJAY AND THE CENTER

1. CONGEN CALCUTTA REPORTS THAT SEVERAL OPEN SIGNS OF HOSTILITY TO SANJAY GANDHI HAVE RECENTLY APPEARED IN WEST BENGAL. ONE IS A PAMPHLET (IN BELGALI) WHICH ATTACKS SANJAY IN THE MOST SCURRILOUS TERMS AND MAKES A STRONG APPEAL TO BENGALI NATIONALISM. IT REFERS TO MRS. GANDHI AS THE "MAHARANI" AND SANJAY AS THE "CROWN PRINCE". IN ADDITION TO CALLING HIM A "CAR THIEF", THE PAMPHLET ALLUDES TO VARIOUS DARK DEEDS IN SANJAY'S PAST, INCLUDING THE ALLEGATION OF HIS INVOLVEMENT IN THE THEFT OF RS. 60 LAKHS FROM THE STATE BANK OF INDIA AND ACCEPTANCE OF PAYMENTS FROM THE BIRLAS IN RETURN FOR REFRAINING FROM PRODUCING THE MARUTI AUTOMOBILE. IN AN APPEAL TO BENGALI NATIONALISM, THE PAMPHLET RHETORICALLY ASKS: "BENGALIS", HOW LONG WOULD YOU LET YOURSELVES BE DECEIVED BY THIS TRICKERY? HOW LONG WOULD YOU LET YOURSELVES BECOME ENUCHS TO GUARD THE HAREM OF SANJAY?"

2. CONGEN CALCUTTA UNDERSTANDS THAT THOUSANDS OF COPIES OF THE PAMPHLET HAVE BEEN DISTRIBUTED IN THE PAST FEW WEEKS THROUGHT WEST BENGAL'S RURAL DISTRICTS. IT IS SIGNED "SOME YOUTH CONGRESS WORKERS DISILLUSIONED WITH SANJAY", BUT RUMOR ATTRIBUTES THE AUTHORITY TO THE P.R. DAS MUNSHI/SAUGATA ROY FACTION OF THE WEST BENGAL CONGRESS UNIT.

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3. IN ADDITION, THE CONGEN HAS LEARNED OF SEVERAL INSTANCES OF STUDENT HOSTILITY TO SANJAY:

(A) IN LATE DECEMBER, WHEN CHIEF MINISTER RAYS FATE WAS BEING DECIDED IN DELHI, LARGE NUMBERS OF CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY STUDENTS CARRIED OUT A STREET DEMONSTRATION, SHOUTING SLOGANS ATTACKING

SANJAY AND SUPPORTING RAY.

(B) ON JANUARY 18, THERE WAS A FIGHT BETWEEN PRO AND ANTI-SANJAY STUDENTS AT CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY.

(C) ON THE SAME DAY, DURING A WELCOMING CEREMONY FOR THE FRESHMAN CLASS AT RABINDRA BHARATI UNIVERSITY, SPEAKERS ATTACKED THE CENTRAL GOVT AND SANJAY.

(D) POSTERS HAVE APPEARED AT ANOTHER COLLEGE IN CALCUTTA WHICH READ: "HOW LONG CAN WE TOLERATE OPPORESSION FROM THE CENTER?"

(E) THE PRO-SANJAY AND ANTI-RAY ENGLISH DAILYANANDA BAZAR PATRIKA HAS BECOME A TRAGET OF STUDENT YOUGH GANGS, WHO HAVE BEEN SEIZING COPIES OF THE PAPER FROM NEWSTANDS AND BURNING THEM.

4. COMMENT: WE WILL COMMENT FURTHER ON RELEVANCE OF THESE SIGNS OF SHARP PRO-ANTI-SANJAY FEELING IN ASSESSMENT OF CONGRESS' ELECTION PROSPECTS AROUND THE COUNTRY IN SEPTTEL SCHNEIDER

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
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Disposition Event:
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